

CITY COUNCIL PROCEEDINGS

BEMIDJI, MINNESOTA

Work Session – April 14, 2008

Pursuant to due call and notice, a work session of the City Council of the City of Bemidji, Beltrami County, Minnesota, was held on Monday, April 14, 2008, at 5:30 p.m. in the Conference Room of City Hall, Mayor Lehmann presiding.

Upon roll call, the following Councilmembers were declared present: Lehmann, Markeson, Hellquist, Johnson, Erickson, Downs, Meuers.

Other & Staff Present: City Manager John Chatten, Finance Director Ron Eischens, City Attorney Alan Felix, City Engineer Brian Freeberg, City Engineer Craig Gray, City Clerk Kay Murphy.

Motion by Meuers, seconded by Johnson, to approve the agenda as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

Nonprofit Donation Policy

Mayor Lehmann stated that the purpose of the meeting was to discuss the City's nonprofit donation policy. He noted that the City currently has a moratorium on giving; however, the Council has made exceptions to that policy. He stated that staff has prepared a list showing monetary and in-kind donations.

Hellquist commented that the Council has tried to address the donation policy a couple of times and have a moratorium. He noted that the City has a finite amount of money and yet the Council continues to consider requests. He commented that he was appalled at the amount of overtime by the police department for various community events.

Johnson suggested that the Council consider dedicating a specific percentage of liquor store proceeds that would be given annually to nonprofit groups that request funding. The City would have to set criteria and the application could be reviewed by the Council or a committee. Donations would be based upon funding availability. He stated that if marketed right, it may increase sales at the City's liquor stores as it would promote the City's commitment to nonprofits in our community.

Erickson stating that the profits from the liquor store are added to the city's revenue, which fund city services. She further stated that although these dollars are not tax dollars they provide tax relief and affect the taxpayer.

Council discussed researching other city's donation policies. Staff noted that this has been done. Felix stated that the League of Minnesota Cities recommended either the City does not entertain requests or have a process whereby the group requesting the funds document how they meet the public purpose requirement.

Eischens commented that the issue comes down to priorities and how the Council feels City funds should be spent. He observed that department heads have unmet needs that they identified last year as part of the budgeting process.

Motion by Erickson, seconded by Hellquist, to continue the moratorium and to discontinue monetary contributions to Habitat for Humanity, Bemidji Senior Center and Beltrami Humane Society. Motion failed with the following vote: Ayes: Erickson, Hellquist, Lehmann. Nays: Downs, Johnson, Markeson, Meuers.

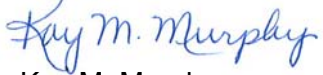
Motion by Johnson, seconded by Markeson, to keep moratorium in place as the city works to develop criteria that would be used to screen nonprofit groups that would request a contribution from a fund that would be generated from liquor store profits. Requests would be considered once a year. Motion failed with the following vote: Ayes: Johnson, Markeson, Meuers. Nays: Downs, Erickson, Lehmann, Hellquist.

Motion by Downs, seconded by Markeson, to keep moratorium in place, but waive the water and sewer bill for the Boys & Girls Club of the Bemidji Area. Motion failed with the following vote: Ayes: Downs, Markeson, Meuers. Nays: Johnson, Erickson, Lehmann, Hellquist.

ADJOURN

There being no further business, motion by Hellquist, seconded by Markeson, to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 6:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Kay M. Murphy
City Clerk